

SECRET

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

Executive Registry

66-3844

2 SEP 1966

Honorable Richard Helms
Director, Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D. C.

Dear Dick:

Reports have come to my attention that Communist and North Vietnamese officials think that the United States' peace overtures are either insincere or unpalatably cast. Furthermore, the reports indicate that, in these same eyes, the United States seriously underestimates the North Vietnamese will to resist and their dedication to the "sacred aims" of a "united Vietnam free from foreign influences." There are references in these reports to alleged inconsistencies between our statements and our deeds, to a difficulty on their part in agreeing to negotiations while bombing raids continue, and to US domestic opinion (which is cited sometimes as deterring negotiations because of its warlike nature and at other times as making negotiations unnecessary because of its anti-war nature).

I would appreciate it if you could prepare for me an analysis of what the attitudes of the North Vietnamese and of the VC are toward our peace overtures, how they interpret our military and political actions, and what approaches therefore should be expected to be sterile and what approaches should be expected to be potentially productive in our attempt to work out a settlement in Vietnam.

Sincerely,

BOB

OSD REVIEW COMPLETED

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